



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

PO Box 47990 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7990

November 9, 2005

TO: Washington State Board of Health Members

FROM: Craig McLaughlin, Executive Director

SUBJECT: STATE HEALTH REPORT AND PUBLIC FORUMS FOR 2005-06

Background and Summary

RCW 43.20.050(b) requires the State Board of Health to produce a State Health Report "that outlines the health priorities of the ensuing biennium." RCW 43.20.050(a) requires, "At least every five years, the state board shall convene regional forums to gather citizen input on public health issues." The State Health Report must consider input from these forums. The Board last held regional forums in 2000.

A discussion of possible directions for the *2006 State Health Report* and the forums was on the Board's September agenda. That discussion did not occur because of time constraints and it was rescheduled for today. A detailed memo from September that describes the directions I have been pursuing in consultation with the Board Chair and the Governor's Office—and some policy implications of that work—is attached.

Since then, I have had additional discussions about the timing of the report and the forums. I am recommending that the Board consider delaying the submission of the proposed report to the Governor until March 10, 2006. This would be done at the Governor's request. I am also recommending that the Board hold three forums across the state in April, May, and June, either during or in conjunction with its regularly scheduled Board meetings. The meetings are tentatively scheduled for Spokane, Kennewick, and King County respectively (see proposed meeting schedule, Tab 12). A purpose of the forums would be to solicit feedback on the draft health report as submitted to the Governor. The discussion section of this memorandum addresses the reasons for these recommendations and a proposed timeline is attached.

I have invited Christina Hulet, Executive Policy Advisor to the Governor, to join us today. She will be able to discuss how the process and the report would be most valuable to the Governor. I have also invited her to raise any other issues the Governor would like to bring to the Board's attention, and to address ways the Board might assist the Governor as she continues to focus her health policy agenda.

Recommended Board Action

The Board may wish to consider, amend if necessary, and adopt the following motion:

Motion: The Board supports current efforts to integrate development of the 2006 State Health Report with the health policy development activities of the Governor's Office, and directs Board staff to seek approval from the Governor to delay submission of a draft report until March 10, 2006.

Discussion

RCW 43.20.050(b) requires that the State Health Report be produced in January of even-numbered years for the Governor to approve, modify, or disapprove. RCW 43.20.050(a) requires, "At least every five years, the state board shall convene regional forums to gather citizen input on public health issues." The State Health Report must consider the input from these forums. The Board last held regional forums in 2000, so these forums are due again this year.

Shortly after taking office, Governor Gregoire articulated three policy priorities for her administration and established interagency teams to identify strategies for addressing these priorities. There are three teams focusing on:

1. Prevention/Making Washington the Healthiest State in the Nation.
2. Cover All Washington's Children by 2010.
3. Health Care Cost-Containment and Quality.

As I have been working with other agencies and the Governor's Office on developing a report that is integrated with, and fully reflects, this interagency work, it has become clear that the traditional framework and timeline for developing the report is impractical and may, in fact, reduce the value of the report to executive agencies and the public. The reasons for this are:

- To meet the January requirement, report development should begin by late summer of the preceding year. Some of the Governor's teams have only recently identified key strategies. A report begun in time to meet the January deadline would not have reflected their work. Nor would it have reflected input solicited from the Governor's Health Summit in October.
- Because of the pressures of legislative session, the Governor and her staff are often unable to fully review the report until well after the end of session.
- If approved, the report is meant to be used by state agency administrators as a guide for preparing agency budgets and executive request legislation for the following biennium. The January deadline is well in advance of when agencies consider legislation and budgets for the following year. The Governor's Office has assured me that a report finalized as late as July would have the same impact on executive agencies.
- Past forums have been sparsely attended and have lacked a clear focus. Having a draft report available prior to the forums would give participants something specific to address. Suggestions received at the forums could be reflected in a later draft.
- Forums would be strengthened by active participation of the Governor's policy staff, or perhaps by the Governor herself. Such participation would not be possible until after the legislative session has ended and the Governor has reviewed and signed passed legislation.

After consultation with the Governor's Office, I am proposing a modified timeline. The Board would approve a preliminary draft at its March 8, 2006 meeting and submit it for the Governor's consideration on the first day after the end of session—March 10, 2005. It would hold the first public forum one month later, allow time for the draft to be reviewed by the Governor's Office, edited as necessary, and published by the end of the month (in advance of the first hearing). The Board would then hold public hearings across the state in conjunction with its regular meetings in April, May, and June. A final draft would be delivered to the Governor for her to approve, disapprove, or modify on July 1, 2006. A detailed timeline is attached.